Utopian thought and communal practice

Robert Owen and the Owenite communities

KRISHAN KUMAR
University of Kent at Canterburry

> The enjoyment of a reformer, I should say,
> is much more in contemplation than in reality.
> William Owen, Diary kept at New Harmony
> (November 10, 1824 – April 20, 1825).

Theory and practice

Theory and practice are essentially separate activities. Just as the artist invents imaginary worlds, so the social theorist invents pure states of society. In neither case is the disjunction absolute, of course. The imaginary world of the artist is built of the bricks of the world he inhabits, however novel and fantastic the structures he creates; all science fiction attests the truth of Freud's observation that "the imagination remains incurably earthbound." So also there is probably no such thing as social theory that does not embody, at some level, the practice of past or present society. The world of Rousseau's *The Social Contract*, for instance, partakes, in however reworked and rarefied a form, of the practices of the classical Greek polis, especially those of Sparta.

It is also probably, and no less importantly, true that there is no human practice that is "theory-free," not governed by some understanding of a crude or refined kind that is essentially theoretical. All human action is premised on norms and values that can be shown to be implicated in a wider system of belief that has all the main attributes of theory. Such action can accordingly be reinforced or reformed by theoretical explication and criticism. All social theory in this sense either is or aspires to become practice.[1]

Nonetheless, overlap or interpenetration is not the same thing as unity. Human activities can no doubt for certain purposes best be seen as uni-

fied, as the multiform expression of our one common "species-being."
But the radical conflation of all categories of human activity, as often in
certain varieties of Marxism or structuralism, can also lead to an unac-
ceptable determinism. There are times when it is equally important to
insist on the real plurality and variety of human activities, to make dis-
tinctions in what humans do. To synthesize – dialectically or otherwise
– theory and practice into some such concept as praxis, understood as
"the unity of theory and practice," is to confuse two activities that are
recognizably different and separable.

There is in fact an older tradition that places praxis in a less elevated
position than that accorded it by many Marxists, especially such as
Georg Lukács.[2] Aristotle seems a more helpful guide when he asks us to
regard *praxis* – (knowledge for) action – as just one kind of human ac-
tivity. There is also *poiesis* – (knowledge for) production – and *theoria*,
(knowledge for) truth. For both Plato and Aristotle the pursuit of truth
(or beauty) was an autonomous activity, operating in a realm of its
own. Theories and concepts certainly had a utilitarian function; this
was the presupposition of philosophic wisdom. But too insistent a
demand that theory be applicable in the concrete world was to mistake
the relation between theory and practice. The value of theory lay in its
very distance and detachment from the world of practice, the very
incompleteness of the fit between theory and practice. For it was only
by this radical separation from practice that theory could achieve that
perfection and wholeness – an aesthetic as much as an intellectual
accomplishment – that was its principle. It was only thus, too, that it
could carry out its practical task, of promoting the striving toward the
ideal. Theory constantly encouraged hopes of its fulfilment in practice;
just as constantly it disappointed them. This "ironic" outcome was
indeed theory's main function. It performed its task by stretching
beyond praxis, by being metaphoric. Theory operated in the realm of
the Idea, or the ideal; by so doing it drew men toward the ideal, as
toward an apparently attainable but in practice always receding goal.
On this Platonic view it is not just, as Michael Polanyi remarks, that "we
know more than we can say;" we also know more than we can do.[3]

We are rightly influenced by the perception that much important social
theory has been in some sense, and at some level, a response to practi-
cal problems. Plato's *Republic* was stimulated by the threatened dis-
solution of the classical polis, just as Hobbes's *Leviathan* was evoked
by the anarchy of the English Civil War. Sociology emerged in the last
century as a response to the problems of the newly emergent industrial

society – rapid urbanization, the conditions of factory life, increasing immiserization in the midst of growing wealth and plenty.[4]

But in no case was the resulting theory simply a remedy for the pressing questions that occasioned it. Indeed it is not even clear that the theory was intended, in all seriousness, to perform this practical function, or that it possibly could. *The Republic* develops a view of the good society that seems to lie beyond not just Plato's times but all times within the human world. The *Leviathan* gave comfort to neither Royalists nor Parliamentarians and has continued to disturb readers with what seems an excessive and idealized attachment to the concept of sovereign power. It is difficult to imagine an actual society organized according to *Leviathan* principles; certainly none such has yet appeared. Marx's concepts of alienation and freedom, Durkheim's analysis of anomie and individualism, Weber's "ideal-typical" rational bureaucracy – in none of these cases are we dealing with anxieties or ideals that are capable of being resolved or realized in anything approaching the form offered to us in their theory. Social conditions are manifestly the origins of theory; they do not and cannot determine its destination. Theory is akin to alchemy. What is enacted in theorizing is a transmutation of the materials of practice into pure or ideal forms.

This may seem an unduly heavy-handed way of introducing a discussion on the relation between utopian thought and communal practice. The connection however has probably already become obvious. *All* social theory is utopian; utopian social theory is only more so. Functionalists construct impossible models of consensual societies; Marxists construct impossible models of conflictual ones. Functionalists dream of timeless states of equilibrium and harmony; Marxists dream of revolution that will usher in an era of total human emancipation.[5] Nor is the utopian dimension of social theory simply true of these famous competing models of man and society. Even at the more modest level of social concepts – family, class, state, ideology, role – we are in the realm of theoretical perfection. Principles of human behavior and organization are stated that, while having some sort of empirical reference, point toward an ideal state of being: classes that are collectively conscious *as* classes, states that are sovereign or registers of the general will, individuals that disappear into the roles marked out for them by the social script.

It does not, it cannot happen quite like that in practice. But of course that does not matter. There is nothing wrong or unusual in theories and

concepts possessing these ideal qualities. Their logical extremism and totalitarian tendency are what identify them as theories. This is what theory is: a one-sided and "unreal" inflation or exaggeration of certain features of individual and social life, magnified to grotesque proportions and parading as the whole truth. This is also the value of theory. For each new theory is a new way of seeing ourselves. It is a description that also contains a prescription. What we do about this, whether in fact we can do anything at all, is another matter. It belongs to the realm of practice, which has its own forms and logic.

Let us not, on the other hand, fall back on the supposedly Weberian position of a science "ideal" as to description or analysis but neutral as to values. Weber himself did not believe this to be ultimately possible and everything we know about the construction of social theory confirms this view. Whatever may be true of the natural world, human beings invent rather than "discover" the facts of the social world, and cannot do otherwise. Their theories carry indelibly the mark of this act of invention or construction, with all the personal and social values entailed in it.[6] Social theory, whether aware of it or not, is shot through with values. It contains a vision of the good life, even though this is sometimes presented as the only possible life. In a sparkling essay in praise of utopian thought H. G. Wells rightly riposted to the positivists and advocates of "scientific sociology": "Sociologists cannot help making Utopias; though they avoid the word, though they deny the idea with passion, their very silences shape a Utopia."[7]

Utopian social theory

Theory may be utopian; but is utopia theory? Is there any useful sense in which we can talk about "utopian social theory," and discuss its relation to practice? Utopias are, after all, by definition fictions. Starting in the sixteenth century with an imitation of travel literature, the literary form to which utopia has come to be most closely related in the last two centuries is the novel. The novel can, as most sociologists will concede, often embody a variety of social theory. It is not too difficult, for instance, to disinter a very powerful theory of the modern city from the novels of Dickens and Dostoyevsky.[8] But these works are based on the very real observation and experience of urban life in nineteenth-century London and St. Petersburg. The utopian city does not exist anywhere, nor does utopian society. From this self-evident fact, Ralf

Dahrendorf has vigorously denied any possible or useful connection between utopia and social reality.

> ...Utopia means Nowhere, and the very construction of a utopian society implies that it has no equivalent in reality. The writer building his world in Nowhere has the advantage of being able to ignore the commonplaces of the real world. He can populate the moon, telephone to Mars, let flowers speak and horses fly, he can even make history come to a standstill – so long as he does not confound his imagination with reality, in which case he is doomed to the fate of Plato in Syracuse, Owen in Harmony, Lenin in Russia.[9]

Dahrendorf has possibly confused utopian writing with some of the standard forms of popular science fiction. It is fairly evident in the cases of practically all the best-known utopias since the sixteenth century that they are, if anything, only too firmly grounded in the contemporary reality, the life of their times and place. "Utopian ideas and fantasies," as Moses Finley has said, "like all ideas and fantasies, grow out of the society to which they are a response."[10] Thus the question of some relation between utopia and reality, between utopian thought and social practice, cannot be ruled out of court from the start, as Dahrendorf and many other plain-speaking, no-nonsense sociologists would have us do.

Nevertheless there remains a problem. We may be able relatively easily to discover a social theory at work in a utopia. Some utopias, such as Edward Ballamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890), are indeed written explicitly as illustrations or exemplifications of social theory (in these cases, two very different varieties of socialism). The same is true of B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948), an account of behaviorist psychology written (so he has said) to instruct his children. There is no problem either in finding social theory, though in a less explicit form, in such famous anti-utopias as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949).[11] But what of those writers who do not write what the Manuels call a proper "speaking-picture utopia?"[12] What of writers such as Saint-Simon, Owen and Fourier, those who following Marx and Engels are commonly designated "utopian socialists?" None of these wrote a utopia in the strict sense of the term – a fictional portrait of an imaginary society in which men and women live the happiest and most fulfilling life possible to humans. How then can they be considered utopians, and their theory utopian theory?

For many purposes of discussion, the Marxian designation of utopian socialism, and what might be implied by that, is all that matters. But just as all social theory can be considered from a utopian perspective, so it may be helpful to see some varieties of social theory as contributing directly to the utopian project. If knowledge of the utopian form can help us toward an understanding of social theory, so some forms of social theory seem peculiarly relevant to helping us understand the utopian imagination. These are social theories that, rejecting the belief in "original sin" or the inherently refractory nature of social life, embody a vision of human perfectibility that puts them essentially at one with utopia.

Historically, this must mean that we are speaking largely of eighteenth- and post-eighteenth century social theory. Only then, with the invention of the ideas of progress, reason, and revolution, was it conceived that a completely new order of human freedom and happiness might be achievable by conscious human action. With Rousseau, Turgot, Morelly, Condorcet, and Godwin, we are in the era of moral and materialist theory that set no bounds to human endeavor. The Scientific and Industrial Revolutions were the vivid proofs of the new worlds that were opening before men's eyes. Utopia gave up its abode in far-off islands and remote mountain valleys, and strode into the realm of a theory that aimed to reshape the world. It cast off the character, inherited from More, of intellectual plaything for a humanist circle, as an amusing object of scholarly contemplation and learned discussion. Utopia now took the whole world for its territory. It embodied its thinking not now in imaginary traveller's tales or elegant works of satire, but in powerful new schools of "scientific" social theory. If we look for utopia now we find it not in narratives of fiction but in theories of society: positivism, socialism, scientific humanism, even liberalism.[13]

It was another revolution of this time, the French Revolution, that also urgently raised the question of the relation of theory to practice. The French Revolution unleashed utopian, indeed millennial, hopes; it just as dramatically dashed them. The question of the road to utopia could no longer be ignored. So long as utopia remained an object of philosophic contemplation – as it had for Plato and More and their various successors – the problem of how to achieve it, in some sense, in the real world never arose.[14] The new social theory could not be so cavalier. Its goals were avowedly and unashamedly utopian; its scientific pretensions at the same time demanded that it provide a compre-

hensive account of humanity's predicament and the effective means of its resolution. One direction led to evolutionary theories that linked man's past, present and future in a progressive sequence culminating in the future utopian society. In another, the making of utopia was seen as a matter of conscious rational design: a plan for a new community, a new society, a new world. In either case, utopia moved into the center of society, into the clear daylight of rational human thought and action. Utopia could not now be discovered "outside" society, in some remote inaccessible corner of the globe, or in the curious practices of alien peoples. The modern utopia belonged squarely to modern society. It would be built out of the materials of modern life or it would not be built at all.

The concern with the path to utopia meant also that the dilemma of ends and means became inescapable. The end-state of social perfection was bound to be affected, was indeed in some degree constituted, by the means adopted for its realization. The awful possibility arose – as the French Revolution to some extent demonstrated – that depending on the choice of means the road could lead to anti-utopia as readily as utopia. What this meant was that, for the first time, the inventors of utopias were obliged to consider not merely specifying the route to utopia but joining in the journey themselves. To sketch the theory without being involved in practice ran the risk of seeing the whole enterprise aborted by a misunderstanding of the relevant principles, and a consequent misapplication of them in practice. Not for these modern utopists, however much modern scholars might wish it, "a functional division of labor between writers of utopias and activist utopians."[15] Whatever their theoretical differences, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Owen, and Marx were all agreed that they could not simply theorize about the future, not simply devise ideal societies that others were left to make. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."[16] With this famous call to action – to "praxis" – Marx not merely called upon the proletariat to fulfil its revolutionary mission but committed his own intellectual and practical energies to furthering this end. Robert Owen was no less scornful of "mere closet theorists" and no less emphatic about the importance of practice.

> Hitherto the world has been tormented by useless *talking* – by much speaking; all of which has proved to be of no avail. Hence-forward, *acting* will render precepts unnecessary; and, in future, systems for the government of mankind will be estimated and valued *by their effects in practice only*.[17]

No less than Marx, too, Owen dedicated his own life and fortune to putting his theories into practice. That both of them were destined to be disappointed in the event is only one more sign of the essential uniformity of much nineteenth-century theory. Whether self-consciously "scientific" or unself-consciously "utopian," thinkers had come to feel that in the urgency of the moment theory without accompanying practice was idle and immoral. The truth of theory – the only kind of truth that mattered – lay in practical demonstration.

Marxism and utopian socialism

If Owen and Marx were thus agreed on some sort of "unity of theory and practice," what constituted the main grounds of the Marxist opposition to "utopian socialism?" How differently did Marxists conceive the relation between theory and practice? And is it possible to pass some sort of judgment on the two approaches? What are the relevant tests?

Marxism objected to utopian socialism on two principal grounds. The utopian socialists, said Marx and Engels, were naive in supposing that the new society could be brought into being without bitter class conflict and revolution. Saint-Simon's appeal first to the Directory, then to Napoleon, then to the statesmen of the Congress of Vienna; Owen's successive dedication of his *New View of Society* to William Wilberforce, "the British Public," the British manufacturers, and finally the Prince Regent: both these famous examples are seen as characteristic expressions of the utopian innocence of the early socialists.[18] Steeped still in Enlightenment rationalism, they appealed to the disinterested benevolence of mankind, and believed in its capacity to be persuaded by reason. For them, said Engels, "socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power."[19]

This sociological innocence sprang from a deeper misunderstanding of the nature of social evolution and the course of modern history. The utopian socialists were given full recognition for being the first to grasp the momentous significance of the Industrial Revolution. But they did not place it in a general theory of social change and development. Or where they did, as with Saint-Simon, they made the mistake of supposing that the new world of freedom and plenty for all was already on the agenda. The general tendency among the utopian socialists then

was to attempt to produce the new society too quickly, before the materials for it had had the chance to develop. They engaged in a foreshortening of the necessary evolution of capitalist industrial society, with the long-drawn-out struggles this would entail. "They acknowledge," complained Engels of the English Owenites, "no historic development and wish to place the nation in a state of Communism at once, overnight, without pursuing the political struggle to the end, at which it dissolves itself."[20]

Lacking this sociological understanding and this historical perspective, the utopian socialists engaged in all kinds of ventures that, although no doubt satisfying to many of the participants, were in no way true paths to the future socialist society. They were the projects, sometimes almost playthings, of wealthy philanthropists and idealists – attempts, all of them, "to achieve salvation behind society's back, in private fashion," rather than through the revolutionizing of society itself.[21] The utopian socialists, said Marx and Engels, "still dream of experimental realisation of their social utopias, of founding isolated "*phalansteres*," of establishing "Home Colonies," of setting up a "Little Icaria" – duodecimo editions of the New Jerusalem … ."[22]

It is important to see that the Marxists did not disagree with the utopian socialists on the question of goals, only of means. Listing the proposals of Owen and co. – the abolition of the distinction between town and country, of the family, of the wage system, of the State – Marx and Engels commended them for their contribution to "the enlightenment of the working class." "In the utopias of a Fourier [or] an Owen," wrote Marx, "there is the anticipation and imaginative expression of a new world." What gave them their "purely utopian character" was their unwarranted assumption of "the disappearance of class antagonisms" – at a time when these antagonisms were still only in their infancy.[23] In the first draft of *The Civil War in France* (1871) – in a passage dropped from the second draft – Marx was inspired by the "utopian" goals of the Paris Commune to dwell again on his essential agreement with the ends proposed by the utopian socialists:

> The Utopian founders of sects [described] … the goal of the social movement, the supersession of the wages system with all its economical conditions of class rule. … From the moment the working men's class movement became real the fantastic utopias evanesced – not because the working class had given up the end aimed at by these Utopians, but because they had found the real means to realise them. … The … ends of the movement proclaimed by the Utopians are the … ends proclaimed by the Paris Revolution

and by the International. Only the means are different and the real condi-
tions of the movement are no longer clouded in utopian fables.[24]

Given this admission of common goals, we have to judge the Marxist
criticism of the utopian socialists partly in terms of the greater realism
of Marxist means. We have, in other words, to assess Marxism's own
understanding of the relation between theory and practice, its concep-
tion of how socialism would or could be achieved. This in turn means
considering the role attributed to the proletariat as the agency of his-
torical change, and specifically as the instrument of the revolution that
will usher in the socialist society.

I have discussed this elsewhere,[25] so will be brief here. The Marxist
hope in the proletariat is as much a matter of faith and "philosophic"
logic as it is of sociological realism or historical understanding. No-
where has the proletariat carried out the task allotted to it, nor is there
currently any sign that it is likely to do so in the future (which does not
mean that it cannot or will not). Where revolutions have been carried
out under the Marxist banner, they have taken place not as Marx
expected in industrial societies but in peasant societies; and the relation
between the practice of these revolutions and Marxist theory remains
as problematic as in any case we might wish to consider from the camp
of the utopian socialists (or any other).

What this means is that we should ignore the polemical efforts of Marx-
ists to distance themselves from the utopian socialists – blessing the
one approach as "scientific" or "realist," damning the other as "vision-
ary" or "fantastic." Both can be considered as true varieties of utopia.[26]
This, as I hope is clear by now, is no slight on either. It is intended to
suggest that both utopian socialism and Marxism are species of social
theory that, heightening and intensifying the generally utopian charac-
ter of all social theory, can properly be called utopian social theory.
They are views and visions of society and social change that aim at the
total transformation of human life. They acknowledge no obstacle,
either in the nature of human kind or society, to the possibility of this
transformation. Marxists would no doubt take issue with the form of
pronouncement but they would certainly concur with the general posi-
tion advanced by Robert Owen in the famous declaration he affixed as
the motto of his *New View of Society*:

Any character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most
enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by

applying certain means; which are to a great extent at the command and under the control, or easily made so, of those who possess the government of nations.[27]

Utopian social theory, like all social theory, specifies both means and ends. Again though it heightens both. Big ends entail big means. Just as its vision of society embodies an account of an attainable state of perfection, so its conception of what is needed to bring in such a state has a correspondingly grand and visionary quality to it. Marx postulated the development, on a world stage, of a confident class-conscious proletariat that would have a grasp of the past, present, and future of humanity, and of its own privileged role within that evolution. The utopian socialists thought too of a new world; but their route to it was less direct and all-encompassing. This may suggest, as indeed is the case, that they, rather than the Marxists, were the greater "realists." But we have to see that the methods advocated by Owen and the other utopian socialists – principally the experimental community – were no less utopian for their being more readily attempted. Anyone could set up an experimental community; the question is what was sought as the goal of that experiment. The utopian end charged the communitarian means with a heavy and special significance. As conceived in the theory of the utopian socialists, the experimental community was, no less than the revolutionary proletariat, the agency that would gradually transform the conditions of social life throughout the whole world.[28] At the end of New Lanark or New Harmony, of Orbiston or Icaria, was not separation or self-sufficiency but the inauguration of a new moral world. "It is not the desertion of society that is proposed to you," declared Victor Considérant in his call to set up a Fourierite colony in Texas, "but the solution of the great social problem on which depends the actual salvation of the world."[29]

Robert Owen's utopia

Attempts have been made to show that Owenism – which I shall here take as my example of utopian socialism[30] – is less "utopian" than is traditionally thought. "Community builders before 1830," says Sidney Pollard, "did *not* start with a social ideal. Robert Owen's plans arose out of his experience and expedients, at New Lanark, and in Manchester... ." Owen, like the many other creators of "industrial villages" of his time, was not so much concerned with realizing a utopian vision as responding to "managerial necessity" in the unprecedented conditions

of the early industrial revolution.[31] E. P. Thompson also stresses managerial problems and "the paternalist tradition:" "We must see that the great experiments at New Lanark were instituted to meet the same difficulties of labour discipline, and the adaptation of the unruly Scottish labourers to new industrial work-patterns that we have already encountered in our discussion of Methodism and of Dr. Ure. ... [Owen] was in one sense the *ne plus ultra* of Utilitarianism, planning society as a gigantic industrial panopticon."[32]

It is Thompson also who, along with others, points to the fact that Owenism worked firmly within an already existing tradition of co-operative and communal practice. "The germ of most of Owen's ideas," he says, "can be seen in practices which anticipate or occur independently of his writings." Labor bazaars, for instance, in which workers directly exchanged their products, had often been set up by artisans in the early years of the nineteenth century. Thus the Owenite Equitable Labour Exchanges of the early 1830s, with their labor notes and exchange of small products, "were not conjured out of the air by paranoiac prophets."[33] Harrison too places Owenite thought and practice within the context of a Tory tradition of organic society that saw the whole of England as a community; and as a complement to this upper-class tradition there was the "indigenous working class culture of collectivism. In the later eighteenth century a network of friendly societies, burial clubs and trade societies attested the strength of this 'ethos of mutuality.' "[34] So far as America was concerned, Owenite communitarianism fitted in even more neatly with the preexisting communitarianism of the religious sects, notably the Shakers and the Rappites. In purchasing New Harmony from the Rappites, Owen bought not just serviceable land and buildings but even more importantly an experience of community of an intensity and scope never known in England.[35]

At a different, and more damaging, level there is the view, voiced especially by the Radicals of the time, that Owen's plans were merely modifications of traditional schemes for lowering the poor rates and getting the unemployed and poor to support themselves. Owen's quadrangular "Villages of Unity and Mutual Cooperation" were denounced by Cobbett as "parallelograms of paupers," and other Radicals saw them as essentially extensions of the workhouse system.[36] Owen himself did not help matters by acknowledging as the original inventor of his scheme the seventeenth-century "projector" John Bellers, with his idea

of privately-run "Colleges of Industry" as the solution to the problem of poverty and unemployment.[37]

The reason for noting these observations on Owenism is not to discredit it – that is certainly not the intention of Harrison and Thompson, whatever may be true of other critics at the time and since.[38] They serve rather to remind us of the particular characteristics of Owenism that were responsible for one part of its remarkable contemporary appeal to people from all ranks of society, and for its enormous success as a social movement. Owenism was presented not as a fanciful scheme of social reform but as a social philosophy with substantial grounding in traditional practice. Most persuasive of all, it was a movement under the leadership of a man who for more than two decades had already had the opportunity to try out his ideas in practice, with what was universally judged to be outstanding success.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of Owen's New Lanark experiment and experience for the appeal of Owenism. Here was a man who was no mere speculative visionary but, as the managing partner of the largest cotton mill in the kingdom, had for twenty-five years been one of the most successful cotton-spinners of his time. He had moreover become so on the basis of radically new methods of industrial and communal organization.[39] Who better to trust in the launching of new ventures, more New Lanarks? Why should they not be blessed with the same magic touch? Owen was, as A. L. Morton notes, "first of all a succesful capitalist," at a time when the capitalist was still in close personal contact with factory machinery and factory workers. "It was this practical knowledge, allied to and transforming the theoretical outlook which he shared with the other utopian socialists, which gave him his peculiar importance."[40] To eminent foreign observers as much as to would-be participants in Owenite communities, what distinguished Owenism from Fourierism and Saint-Simonism was precisely the character and experience of its founder. Owen himself tirelessly rammed home the message in innumerable speeches and writings. In his "Report to the County of Lanark" (1820), for instance, Owen accepts that the willingness to continue a new system "will proceed solely from proof, in practice, of the very great superiority of the new arrangements over the old." In the case of his system, Owen was able to say with satisfaction, the test had already been made in front of the whole world at New Lanark – and that in circumstances by no means propitious to the theory. For

> acting on principles merely *approximating* to those of the new system, and at
> the same time powerfully counteracted by innumerable errors of the old sys-
> tem, he [Owen] has succeeded in giving to a population originally of the most
> wretched description, and placed under the most unfavourable circum-
> stances, such habits, feelings, and dispositions as enable them to enjoy more
> happiness than is to be found among any other population of the same extent
> in any part of the world. ...[41]

New Lanark, it can be seen, carried a double message to the world. It
was in one guise the source of reassurance as to the hard-headed prac-
ticality of Owenite schemes. But what made it a source of inspiration to
others not so enamored of success in a corrupt world was its other face:
its utopian promise, the hope it offered in particular to groups shat-
tered by the violent impact of the Industrial Revolution. For all the fre-
quently uttered caveats of Owen and his followers that New Lanark
could not be regarded as a "pure" test of Owenism, since Owen had
had to build on what was already there, Owen himself never went back
on the view that New Lanark was "the great experiment which was to
prove to me, by practice, the truth or error of the principles which had
been forced on my conviction." If society at large were to be changed, it
would do so "in the same manner that I commenced the change in New
Lanark." As he grew older, the utopian stature of New Lanark grew
rather than diminished in Owen's imagination. He came to regard it as
"the most important experiment for the happiness of the human race
that had yet been instituted at any time in any part of the world."[42]
New Lanark, Harrison says, became "the prototype of the villages of
cooperation. ... Imperfect as the community organisation at New
Lanark was, it nevertheless suggested lines of development for the new
moral world of the future. Features which later became characteristic
of Owenite communities and ideas which Owen later repeated in new
contexts appeared first in the great experiment."[32]

Who indeed can miss the utopian cast of Owenite thought and prac-
tice? The very names of books, journals, organizations, and institutions
speak it. There were Owen's own inspirational writings: *A New View of
Society* (1813), *Lectures on an Entire New State of Society* (1830), *Out-
line of the Rational System of Society* (1830), *The Book of the New
Moral World* (1836–44), *The Revolution in the Mind and Practice of
the Human Race* (1849), *The Future of the Human Race, Or, a Great
Glorious and Peaceful Revolution, Near at Hand* ... (1853). There were
the Owenite journals, such as *The Mirror of Truth, The Beacon, Crisis,
The New Moral World*, the *Herald of Progress, The New Age*, and
Weekly Letters to the Human Race. Owenites banded together in the

British Association for Promoting Cooperative Knowledge, the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, the British and Foreign Consolidated Association of Industry, Humanity and Knowledge, the Association of All Classes of All Nations, the Universal Community Society of Rational Religionists. They set up National Equitable Labour Exchanges on a palatial scale, the bridge, Owen declared, to the new world of socialism. They sang Social Hymns in their Halls of Science. They appointed Social Missionaries to propagate the Owenite philosophy.[44] It would be surprising, in view of all of this, if we were *not* to come across Robert Owen frequently announcing the imminent dawn of a new age:

> From this day a change must take place; a new era must commence; the human intellect, through the whole extent of the earth, hitherto enveloped by the grossest ignorance and superstition, must begin to be released from its state of darkness; nor shall nourishment henceforth be given to the seeds of disunion and division among men. For the time is come, when the means may be prepared to train all the nations of the world – men of every colour and climate, of the most diversified habits – in that knowledge which shall impel them not only to love but to be actively kind to each other in the whole of their conduct, without a single exception.[45]

This is of course the language of millenarianism – as Owen himself knew perfectly well, and which he put to calculated use from his earliest writings. In the very address of 1816 from which this passage is quoted Owen deliberately invokes the language of Biblical prophecy, and sees the new principles of society as "the harbinger of that period when our swords shall be turned into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks ... no ground of anger or displeasure from one human being towards another will remain; the period of the supposed Millennium will commence, and universal love prevail."[46] Here Owen uses millennial language largely for its rhetorical force; later, as many scholars have shown, Owen and Owenism moved steadily toward strict millenarian beliefs and acted increasingly as a millennial sect. For most Owenites the millenarianism might be of the secular variety, but it was so close to traditional Christian millenarianism as to make the distinction largely formal. In the first number of the journal *The New Moral World*, on 1 November 1834, there is no quibbling any longer about "the supposed Millennium." Owen simply announced: "This ... is the Great Advent of the World, the second coming of Christ, for Truth and Christ are one and the same. The first coming of Christ was partial development of Truth to the few. ... The second coming of Christ will make Truth known to the many ... The time is therefore arrived when the foretold millennium is about to commence."[47]

To acknowledge the millenarian strand in Owenism is not to detract from its utopianism. Although there is a clear tension between religious and utopian systems of thought,[48] in many social movements the overlap can be considerable. This is obvious for instance in several of the radical sects of the English Civil War, such as the Diggers and the Fifth Monarchy Men. It is also true, in a somewhat different way, of American millenarian sects such as the Shakers, the Rappites, and the Oneida community. Whether we choose to emphasize the (secular) utopian or the (religious) millenarian aspect of their thought and life is largely a matter of the focus of our interest. It is certainly no accident that many secular utopian communities in nineteenth-century America borrowed heavily from groups such as the Shakers.[49]

In the case of the utopian social theory of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the overlap between utopianism and millenarianism was especially pronounced. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment secularized the Christian millennium.[50] But that only made it easier for millenarian forms of thought and belief to flourish. Reformers and revolutionaries no longer had to fight off the transcendentalism and essential "other worldliness" that ultimately characterized all Christian thought, even the most radical. Millenarianism hence frequently crept in by the back door, and was at times, as with Owenism in its later phases, actively welcomed and embraced.[51] Marxism, notoriously, was not immune from this powerful influence. Several interesting accounts have tried to show the persistence in Marxism of various elements of Judaeo-Christian millenarianism – the correspondence, for instance, between Marx's view of history and that of the twelfth-century Calabrian monk Joachim of Fiore, the founder of revolutionary "Third Age" millenarianism.[52]

Nothing in this, again, need vitiate Marxism's claim to be secular social theory, though it does help us to understand why it may be proper to regard Marxism as utopian social theory. The secular utopianism comes out in Marx's view of revolution, the classless society of the future, the overcoming of alienation, "the return of man to himself," and other familiar features of Marx's vision of full communism.[53] Owenism can, if need be, similarly be detached from its millenarian trappings and considered mainly from the point of view of its secular utopian striving. Here one would want to include, for instance, Owen's insistence that the Industrial Revolution was pointing the way toward abundance for all. In the early years of the century, Owen informed an audience of workers and manufacturers in 1827, "you passed a boundary never

before reached in the history of man: you passed the regions of poverty arising from necessity and entered those of permanent abundance."[54] In the society of abundance, moreover, organized according to rational principles of wealth-creation and use, the crippling division of labor will be no more:

> There would at once be an end of all mere animal machines, who could only follow a plough, or turn a sod, or make some insignificant part of some insig-nificant manufacture or frivolous article which society could better spare than possess. Instead of the unhealthy pointer of a pin, – header of a nail, – piecer of a thread – or clodhopper, senselessly gazing at the soil or around him, without understanding or rational reflection, there would spring up a working class full of activity and useful knowledge, with habits, information, manners, and dispositions that would place the lowest in the scale many degrees above the best of any class which has yet been formed by the circum-stances of past or present society.[55]

And the means to this utopian goal were equally utopian: education and community. Or rather: education *in* community. For as Harrison shows, for the Owenites education and community were two sides of the same coin. Progressive education, of the kind practiced by the Pestallozians and enthusiastically championed by the Owenites, demanded a communal context for its proper working. On the other hand, Owenites were equally clear that education was central to the aim of producing the new man and the new woman. Education would fashion the new dispositions and ways of thinking that were the essen-tial basis of the successful community. The school, declared the Owen-ite editor George Mudie, was "the steam engine of the moral world." Through education, Owen told the communitarians at New Harmony, "a whole community can become a new people, have their minds born again, and be regenerated from the errors and corruptions which … have hitherto everywhere prevailed."[56]

At times education could come to seem not the means but the very end of community: education as the production of "the whole person," community living as a continuous educational experience in itself, as an experiment in education. What this meant though was that any attempt to separate the two was bound to be fatal to both. Progressive educa-tional ventures might be attempted in isolated or privileged enclaves, as in Pestalozzi's or de Fellenberg's schools in Switzerland, or at Marie Fretageot's academy for girls in Philadelphia. But for Owenites the proper place was in a fully functioning and comprehensive community. In this sense therefore community did take precedence. It was the cen-

tral institution of Owenism, and community-building the principal ac-
tivity. Without it all the Owenite aims – the abolition of the family,
reform of marriage, achievement of equality, abolition of the distinction
between mental and manual labor, and of town and country, an end to
courts and prisons, and to war and government – would remain an
empty dream.[57] As the Owenite Social Hymn put it,

> Community does all possess
> That can to man be given;
> Community is happiness,
> Community is heaven.[58]

Theory and practice of communitarianism

The Owenite communities all failed, sometimes swiftly and disastrous-
ly. New Lanark itself, the great emblem of the practical success of
Owenite principles, went out of Owen's control after 1828, and lapsed
into obscurity thereafter. New Harmony, the great American experi-
ment on which Owen placed such utopian hopes, lasted hardly more
than a year as an integrated community. Started in May 1825, by
March 1826 it had effectively divided into three communities, Mac-
luria and Feiba-Peveli having split off from the parent community, now
constituted as the Community of Equality. Further splitting took place
in 1826, with a School Society, an Agricultural and Pastoral Society,
and a Mechanic and Manufacturing Society forming themselves as
independent communities. "As an experiment in Owenite communitar-
ianism New Harmony virtually came to an end with Owen's departure
in June 1827."[59] The failure of a final attempt at reorganization in 1828
led to the selling or leasing of much of the land and buildings at New
Harmony, Owen and Maclure dividing up the remnant between them
as private holdings.[60]

Other well-known Owenite communities did not fare much better.
Orbiston in Lanarkshire started in March 1825 with a large member-
ship – at one time there were over three hundred people in residence –
in comfortable quarters, but had collapsed by the autumn of 1827.
Ralahine, an extensive agricultural community in County Clare in Ire-
land, lasted from 1831–1833. Queenwood (or Harmony Hall) in
Hampshire, with a thousand acres and a purpose-built residence "in the
baronial style," lasted a little longer, from 1839–1845, but was badly
split well before its end. And there were many other lesser-known

Owenite communities in Britain and America in the 1830s and 1840s that met the same swift fate.[61]

Faced with this recital, it is hardly surprising that most students of these communities have concluded that the Owenite experiment in communitarianism was a more or less outright failure. Harrison delivers the generally accepted verdict: the record of the "lost communities" is "a dismal one." "Few of them lasted more than two or three years, most of them were plagued by internal strife, and their impact upon society at large appears to have been negligible."[62] Other Owenite institutions, inside and outside the communities, get equally short shrift. The Labour Exchanges, says Thompson, were "a spectacular muddle."[63] The producers' cooperatives of the 1820s and 1830s failed so comprehensively that in the next wave of the cooperative movement only retail cooperatives – for which Owen had nothing but contempt – were attempted.[64] Owenite efforts at trade-unionism, notably the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, collapsed with embarassing speed.[65]

Is this failure to be seen as a failure of *theory*? Were the Owenites defective in their theory of community? Many have complained that "they did not ... pay sufficient attention to the devising of means for achieving their ends."[66] Owenite ventures, says Thompson, came to an end in a "muddle of waste, benevolence and bad planning."[67] Not only, as Marx and Engels complained, did they naively try to ignore the realities of class and power in the society at large, they were deficient too in their understanding of the mechanisms of community commitment and integration.[68] Too little attention was paid to the selection of individuals and families for membership in the community. The communities were largely financed by wealthy philanthropists such as Owen and Maclure and remained heavily dependent on their goodwill and even more their fortunes. The immediate cause of the dissolution of many a community was a change in the attitude or affluence of its sponsors (Ralahine, for instance, collapsed because its main backer, Vandeleur, gambled away his fortune in the Dublin clubs). Generally too much hope was placed in the conquering power of reason and good example.

All this may be so; but if so, the Owenite communities have shared these or similar failings with practically all communities – the religious ones mainly excepted – of modern times. Again and again there is the litany of complaints of authoritarian leadership, poor financial management, a too generous "open door" policy of membership, a

sublime indifference to the crushing power – as well as the seductive-
ness – of the outside world.[69] The natural consequences followed, as
with the Owenites. Of the ninety-one American "utopian communities"
identified by Kanter for the period 1780–1860, for instance, eighty
were judged "unsuccessful" by the test of survival for at least twenty-
five years (i.e., a generation).[70] The communes of the 1960s and 1970s
can be numbered in the hundreds, but few survived for more than a few
years, many only for a few months.[71]

To regard the communities as failures on the criterion of long-term sur-
vival is to mistake their purpose, and their value. Communities are
experiments in living, and longevity is not necessarily a test – certainly
not the only test – of their contribution to what Aldous Huxley called
"that most difficult and most important of all the arts – the art of living
together in harmony and with benefit for all concerned." Praising the
communities for their contribution to this art, Huxley added: "For
anyone who is interested in human beings and their so largely unreal-
ized potentialities, even the silliest experiment has value, if only as
demonstrating what ought not to be done."[72] Owen constantly insisted
on the tentative and experimental nature of all communitarian ven-
tures. Submitting his plan for the Villages of Cooperation to the public
in 1817, he said: "I have no wish ... that any more confidence should be
placed in what I say, than to induce the public to give fair trial to the
plan. If I am in error, the loss and inconvenience, compared with the
object, will be small; but if I am right, the public and the world will be
gainers indeed!"[73]

The Marxists have misled us by making us see Owenism primarily as an
early chapter in the history of socialism. Owenism's "utopianism" is
then contrasted with the greater realism of the succeeding phases –
which includes the abandonment of communitarianism and the adop-
tion of a national and international framework. This Whiggish interpre-
tation of history has to be rejected here as elsewhere. Owenism, like
other varieties of "utopian socialism," has its own independent impor-
tance, in its own terms. It too aimed its message at the world; but it saw
the right way not as apocalyptic revolution but as a gradual, tentative,
incremental exploration of new forms of community living. Its great
example was not, as with the Marxists, the French Revolution but more
the early Christian communities that sought to offer exemplary models
of alternative ways of life in the hope of converting their heathen neigh-
bors.

Small scale and variety of method were critical to this approach. Through these experiments, Owenites hoped, they would gain the knowledge of the most basic task in building the new society: the production of new human beings. Hence the enormous emphasis on education and training, on the need to remove the child from "the yet untrained and untaught parents" and to inculcate the right habits and responses from the earliest possible age.[74] The Institution for the Formation of Character at New Lanark was rightly regarded by Owen as the center-piece of that whole enterprise. It was, he told the inhabitants at its opening in 1816, "intended to produce permanently beneficial effects; and, instead of longer applying temporary expedients for correcting some of your most prominent external habits, to effect a complete and thorough improvement in the *internal* as well as *external* character of the whole village."[75]

"What," asked Max Weber in 1918, "will that 'association' look like of which the Communist Manifesto speaks? What germ-cells of that kind of organization has Socialism in particular to offer if ever it gets a real chance to seize power and rule as it wills?"[76] Orthodox, "scientific" socialism, as Martin Buber pointed out, had been remarkably reluctant even to examine the question, let alone suggest some answers. Marx had made a masterly analysis of the economic and political dimensions of modern society; but he gave curiously little thought to the third dimension, "the evolution of the social form," the social restructuring that the new society would necessarily entail. Not much could be gathered on this from occasional allusions to "elements of the new society which have already developed in the womb of the collapsing bourgeois society," and which the Revolution had only "to set free." Toward certain of those elements, such as cooperatives, Marx and Engels indeed showed a lukewarm and at times positively hostile attitude; at best cooperatives were seen as adjuncts to political and trade union struggles in stimulating the working class to political organization. They were not regarded as invaluable learning experiences, exercises, however partial, in socialist living. "The socialist idea," says Buber,

> points of necessity ... to the organic construction of a new society out of little societies inwardly bound together by common life and common work, and their associations. But neither in Marx nor Lenin does the idea give rise to any clear and consistent frame of reference for action. In both cases the decentralist element of re-structure is displaced by the centralist element of revolutionary politics.[77]

The utopian socialists, such as the Owenites, aimed precisely at this

area. Their whole concern was with the "germ-cells" of the new moral world. Whatever the unreality of their hopes, they at least addressed the fundamental question of the social substance of the new society. Their experiments with collective property, new family and marriage arrangements, new forms of education and child-rearing, new types and relationships of work, a new balance of work and leisure, the education of the emotions and the senses as well as the mind – their efforts, in short, to build a new culture as well as a new society,[78] all provided – and provide – a rich storehouse of lessons and examples to all those engaged in trying to bring into being a new kind of society. The unhappy experiences of the Soviet experiment in communism, deliberately turning its back on its own rich experience of communal life, is a measure of what was lost to socialism in its rejection of the legacy of the utopian socialists.

The communitarian tradition was of course not lost but it led elsewhere – to the kibbutzim of Israel, to the communities such as Twin Oaks stimulated by B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948), to the countercultural communes of the 1960s, and to the "ecotopian" communities of the ecology movement.[79] And whatever Western socialists might think of Owen, his name was revered in those societies of the "Third World" that saw in the cooperative principle an alternative to both the "possessive individualism" of the West and the state socialism of the East.[80]

Cooperatives, however, are only one part, and a relatively minor one, of Owenism; and if this were to be seen as the main practical achievement of Owenism in the long run, we may well feel that it is a very far cry away from the utopian aspirations of the original movement. The matter raises once more, in other words, the question of the relation between the ideal and the reality, between utopian theory and communal practice. How should we judge Owen and the Owenites? Were they naive idealists, dreamers of impossible worlds? Was the failure of their communities the direct result of the weakness of their theory?

William Maclure, Owen's principal associate in the New Harmony venture, was appalled on hearing in 1829 that Owen, undismayed by the failure of New Harmony, was about to approach the Mexican government to allow him to conduct an even grander experiment in Texas. "So long as he stops at theory all will be well," he wrote to Marie Fretageot, "but should he attempt practice, the second edition of New Harmony will be published to the world confounding his theories and bringing loss and disappointment on all that have placed faith and confidence in

him."[81] Ralph Waldo Emerson however, himself the inspirer of the uto-
pian Brook Farm, took a kindlier view of Owen when he encountered
him much later, amidst the new wave of Fourierist communitarianism
in America in the 1840s. The Owenites, he thought, were too sanguine
– or too mechanical – in their view of the absolute plasticity of man.

> Yet in a day of small, sour, and fierce schemes, one is admonished and
> cheered by a project of such friendly aims and of such bold and generous
> proportions; there is an intellectual courage and strength in it which is supe-
> rior and commanding; it certifies the presence of so much truth in theory,
> and in so far is destined to be fact.[82]

But how much "fact," and of what kind? The Owenite communities
showed with stunning clarity the shadow that falls, and always will fall,
between theory and practice. This is not to denigrate either theory or
practice as "failing" in their respective tasks. Each has a different and
equally important task. In his utopian theory, the elaboration of which
increasingly came to preoccupy him,[83] Owen developed an ideal of a
new communal order for industrial society that to many people still
seems the most attractive of social philosophies to have emerged since
the Industrial Revolution. Developed especially by anarchist thinkers
such as Proudhon and Kropotkin in the last century, and Martin Buber
and Paul Goodman in this,[84] it continues to inspire communitarian
experiments whenever and wherever the space and opportunity pre-
sent themselves: as in the short-lived soviets of the Russian Revolution,
the anarchist communes of the Spanish Civil War, and the student com-
munes of May '68 in France.

Communal practice has fed off this theory; but it has also its own logic
and momentum. It has had to find its own forms and routines out of the
realities of its particular circumstances of place and time. Twin Oaks in
Virginia, for instance, acknowledges its indebtedness to Skinner's
Walden Two for its initial inspiration, but is equally clear on the extent
to which it has had to modify Skinner's doctrines and techniques in
maintaining what has been a remarkably successful community.[85] The
communal impulse, one might almost go as far as to say, has its own
independent existence, only tangentially affected by the theories that
seek to guide it. Time and again, whether it be to try out new theories
of education, new therapies of mental health, new conceptions of mar-
riage and the family, new ways of relating to the natural environment,
men and women have almost instinctively withdrawn into communities
to find, by painful error if need be, what the value of their beliefs might
be, and to modify or extend them in the light of that experience. That

these communities may last only a few months or a few years is imma-
terial. For those who participate in them, as for those who study and
observe them with sympathy, a day in the life of such a community may
be a transfiguring experience.[86]

In the end it may be – as this last remark partly suggests – that the rela-
tion between utopian (or any) theory and practice is best seen on the
analogy of the relation between religious thought and practice. The his-
tory of Christianity in particular is replete with striking instances of the
disparity between Christian teaching and the practices of the Christian
Church. The monastic movement and the Protestant Reformation are
the best-known "utopian" responses to this situation, attempts to make
Christian practice square as far as humanly possible with Christian
theory. In their inexorable routinization and secularization they con-
firmed the persistent and seemingly unbridgeable gulf between ideal
and reality. Christian theologians, starting with Augustine, have in fact
seen it as one of their prime tasks to explain why human practice can
never fully correspond to the purest Christian precepts, why the
heavenly city must always remain in a separate though parallel sphere
to the earthly city.

This, although regretted by some, has been seized as an opportunity by
others. God is the more inspiring for being hidden; His very inscrut-
ability, and the unattainability of Christian perfection, constantly urge
us on to uncover the veil, to strive to achieve the impossible. Jurgen
Moltmann, in developing his "theology of hope," speaks of "a horizon
or boundary which does not confine but rather invites one to go
beyond."[87] So with utopian theory and practice. The impossibility of
utopia does not breed despair or hopelessness – not, that is, so long as
utopia does not degenerate into fantasy but retains that foothold in
reality that it has always had since the time of Thomas More. Utopia
rather keeps alive that "impossible hope without which all hope loses
its meaning." "Be realists – demand the impossible," proclaimed the
Situationists in Paris in May 1968. It was a slogan well in keeping with
the spirit, if not the letter of utopian socialism; and it would surely have
gladdened Owen to know that, as with him, the repeated disappoint-
ments of practice had done nothing to quench the utopian spirit in the
modern society whose birth-pangs he had hoped and tried to ease.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. See Charles Taylor, "Social Theory as Practice," in idem, *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 91–115. A similar position, which focuses on the intentions inherent in all actions (linguistic and non-linguistic), and the meaning-systems thereby entailed, is argued by Quentin Skinner, " 'Social Meaning' and the Explanation of Social Action," in Peter Laslett, W. G. Runciman, and Quentin Skinner, editors, *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, Fourth Series (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), 136–157.

2. For the history of the concept of praxis, see N. Lobkowicz, *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx* (Notre Dame, Ill., and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967); G. Petrovic, "Praxis," in T. Bottomore, editor, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 384–389. As Petrovic points out (p. 386), for most Marxists "revolution is the true praxis," thus squarely linking (socialist) theory with (proletarian) practice. And for a recent contribution, see Gavin Kitching, *Karl Marx and the Philosophy of Praxis* (London: Routledge, 1988).

3. Polanyi is quoted in David L. Hall, *Eros and Irony: A Prelude to Philosophical Anarchism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), 65; and generally for this (Platonic) view of theory as a form of irony, see ibid., 45–72. And cf. Ralf Dahrendorf, on the specific case of sociology: "Sociology is theory, and no amount of 'decided reason' [Habermas] will set it to dealing actively with the social and political problems of our time. The verbal radicalism of those who like to see sociology and socialism confused – the silly talk, for example, of theory that itself becomes practice – is pseudopractice, the wishful thinking of people rendered politically inactive by frustrated ambition." "Sociology and the Sociologist: On the Problem of Theory and Practice," in idem, *Essays in the Theory of Society* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 274.

4. For sociology as a response to industrialization, see R. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (London: Heinemann, 1967); K. Kumar, *Prophecy and Progress: The Sociology of Industrial and Post-Industrial Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978), chs. 2–3.

5. On functionalism as a utopia, see Ralf Dahrendorf, "Out of Utopia: Toward a Reorientation of Sociological Analysis," in his *Essays in the Theory of Society*, 107–128 (first published in the *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LXIV, No. 2, 1958). On Marxism as a utopia, see K. Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 49–65; S. Lukes, "Marxism and Utopia," in P. Alexander and R. Gill, editors, *Utopias* (London: Duckworth, 1984), 153–167; V.

Geoghegan, *Utopianism and Marxism* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987). On the utopian dimension to nineteenth-century social theory, see Barbara Goodwin, *Social Science and Utopia* (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978).

6. See Alvin W. Gouldner, "Anti-Minotaur: The Myth of a Value-Free Sociology," in his *For Sociology: Renewal and Critique in Sociology Today* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1975), 3–26; but cf. also his "The Sociologist as Partisan," ibid., 27–68. See also Brian Fay, *Social Theory and Social Practice* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1975).

7. H. G. Wells, "The So-Called Science of Sociology," in idem., *An Englishman Looks at the World* (London: Cassell and Co., 1914), 205. I have discussed this position in the context of Wells's work in "H. G. Wells and the 'So-Called Science of Sociology'", in C. Rolfe and P. Parrinder, editors, *H. G. Wells Under Revision* (Associated University Presses of America, forthcoming).

8. See, e.g. A. Welsh, *The City of Dickens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); D. Fanger, *Dostoyevsky and Romantic Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

9. Dahrendorf, "Out of Utopia," 112.

10. M. Finley, "Utopianism Ancient and Modern," in K. H. Wolff and Barrington Moore Jr., editors, *The Critical Spirit* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 6.

11. For all these works as social theory, see Part II of Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*.

12. Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 2. The phrase is taken from Sir Philip Sidney's definition of poetry as "a speaking picture – with this end, to teach and delight." Sidney cites More's *Utopia* as poetic in this sense. *A Defence of Poetry* (1595), ed. Jan Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 25, 33.

13. For the reorientation of utopian thought in the eighteenth century, see Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, 33–49. See also Judith Shklar, "The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia," in Frank E. Manuel, editor, *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (London: Souvenir Press, 1973), 101–115; Manuel and Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 3–4, 453 ff.

14. For a discussion of Plato's *Republic* in these terms, see Peter Alexander, "Grimm's Utopia: Motives and Justifications," in Alexander and Gill, editors, *Utopias*, 31–42.

15. Manuel and Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 9.

16. Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach" (1845), in D. McLellan, editor, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 158.

17. Robert Owen, "A Catechism of the New View of Society and Three Addresses" (1817), in Robert Owen, *A New View of Society, and Other Writings* (London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1972), 188 (Owen's emphases). It is worth in this context noting the full title of Owen's most famous work, *A New View of Society* (1813), which continues: "Or, Essays on the Principle of the Formation of the Human Character, and the Application of the Principle to Practice."

18. For Saint-Simon, see Frank E. Manuel, *The New World of Henri Saint-Simon* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), passim, esp. 272 ff. Owen's various dedications are reprinted in the Everyman edition of *A New View of Society*, 5–13.

19. Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" (1877), in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), Vol. 2, 128. And cf. E. P. Thompson: "Owen indeed was not the first of the modern Socialist theorists ... but one of the last of the 18th-

century rationalists." *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1964), 784. And on Owen as an Enlightenment rationalist, with a special indebtedness to Scottish thinkers, see also J. F. C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America: The Quest for the New Moral World* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 83–87; J. H. Treble, "The Social and Economic Thought of Robert Owen," in J. Butt, editor, *Robert Owen: Prince of Cotton Spinners* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971), 31–33.

20. F. Engels, "The Condition of the Working Class in England" (1845), in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), Vol. 4, 525.

21. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (1852), in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Vol. 1, 255. A different formulation of the same point is made by Marx in the third of his Theses on Feuerbach, where he accuses environmentalists such as Owen of ignoring the role of "revolutionizing practice:" "The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society [as in Robert Owen, Engels added in his 1888 edition]. The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice." "Theses on Feuerbach," 156.

22. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848), in *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Vol. 1, 63.

23. Ibid., 63; also letter of Marx to L. Kugelman, 9 October 1866, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.) 223. Later critics have followed this line closely – see, e.g., Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 805; A. L. Morton, *The English Utopia* (1952; London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1969), 169.

24. K. Marx and F. Engels, *On the Paris Commune* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), 166. For a discussion of the two drafts, see M. Lasky, *Utopia and Revolution* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1976), 36–43. And on the relations generally among Marx, Engels, and the utopian socialists, see L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, 3 Vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), Vol. 1, 218–224; Geoghegan, *Utopianism and Marxism*, 22–34. Geoghegan also stresses that for Marx and Engels the disagreement with the utopian socialists was basically one of means, not ends: "…they saw their dispute as methodological; the utopian socialist vision is at best a subjective imaginative abstraction from the divisions of class society, whilst the communist vision, by contrast, is the objective *telos* capitalist society creates as it negates itself." Ibid., 29.

25. See K. Kumar, "Can the Workers Be Revolutionary?" *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 6 (1978), 357–379, reprinted in K. Kumar, *The Rise of Modern Society: Aspects of the Social and Political Development of the West* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

26. For the characterization of Marxism as utopian, see Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, 53–65, and the references cited on 435–439. See also A. Harris, "Utopian Elements in Marx's Thought," *Ethics*, Vol. LX, Pt. 2 (1950), 79–99; Geoghegan, *Utopianism and Marxism* passim, esp. 33–34, 134–135.

27. Robert Owen, *A New View of Society*, title page of first edition of 1813 (as reprinted in the Everyman edition). The motto is repeated, in a subtly modified form, as the epigraph to the First Essay: see ibid., 14. For the general character of utopian

theory, see the discussion in B. Goodwin & K. Taylor, *The Politics of Utopia* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 15–91, with good bibliographies. See also J. C. Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society: A Study of English Utopian Writing 1516–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1–40; T. Kenyon, "Utopia in Reality: 'Ideal' Societies in Social and Political Theory," *History of Political Thought*, Vol. III, No. 1 (1982), 123–155.

28. Cf. Harrison's comment on the Owenites' "active belief in communitarianism as a method of social reform:" "Society was to be radically transformed by means of experimental communities, and this was regarded as a valid alternative to other methods of effecting social change such as revolution or legislation." *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 47; see also 144–145. The Manuels say of Owen and Fourier, "the two major early nineteenth-century apostles of the small community movement:" "[They had] complete confidence in the gradual contagion of the communal movement, leading to a belief that a single successful experiment based upon their principles of organization would provide an example so compelling that, better than any arguments, it would persuade the rest of mankind to adopt their system. ..." *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 586–587. And cf. also Bestor on nineteenth-century American communitarianism: "They had faith that if the world could but see a successful experiment, it would hasten to duplicate it and reduplicate it until whole nations were dotted with associations and a higher form of society would come into being." Arthur Bestor, "The Search for Utopia," in John J. Murray, editor, *The Heritage of the Middle West* (Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 107.

29. Victor Considérant, *The Great West* (1854), quoted in Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships between Social Reform and Westward Expansion," *American Historical Review*, Vol. LVIII, No. 3 (1953), 524.

30. Although I recognize that there are significant differences among Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen (not to mention Proudhon and Cabet), the most important for the present purpose being perhaps the absence of the communitarian element in Saint-Simonism. For a good discussion of these differences, see Manuel and Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 581–589, and 590 ff; Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (1949; Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 16–57. See also Keith Taylor, *The Political Ideas of the Utopian Socialists* (London: Frank Cass, 1982); L. Loubère, *Utopian Socialism: Its History Since 1800* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing, 1974).

31. Sidney Pollard, "The Factory Village in the Industrial Revolution," *English Historical Review*, Vol. 79 (1964), 514, 529 (Pollard's emphasis). See also Pollard, *The Genesis of Modern Management* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), passim, esp. 192–208. Others have also stressed the extent to which Owen's ideas and practices fitted into the paternalistic tradition of Scotland, which was already being adapted by several other local mill-owners of the time to the requirements of the early industrial communities. These industrialists included David Dale, the founder of New Lanark and later Owen's father-in-law. See James H. Stewart, "Paternalism in Scotland and the Owenite Ideal: A Possible Context for New Lanark," Paper presented to the International Conference on "Utopian Thought and Communal Experience," Edinburgh and New Lanark, 18–21 July, 1988; David J. McLaren, *David Dale of New Lanark* (Milngavie: Heatherbank Press, 1983).

32. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 780–781.

33. Ibid., 790–791.

34. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 50. The phrase "ethos of mutuality" is E. P. Thompson's. For his account of working-class community in this period, see *The Making of the English Working Class*, 401–447.

35. The fullest and best account of Owen's indebtedness to the communitarianism of the American religious sects is Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663–1829* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950), chs. 1–3, esp. 38–59. See also Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 53–57. The most detailed account of Owen's purchase of New Harmony is in Anne Taylor, *Visions of Harmony: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Millenarianism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 51–93.

36. "In one of its aspects," say the Manuels, "Owen's plan was a reversion to the idea of communal moral responsibility to provide employment for the meritorious poor." *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 680. For the Poor Law context of Owen's early plans, see J. R. Poynter, *Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795–1834* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); see also Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 11–25. On the hostile Radical response to these plans, see Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 782–783; W. Hamish Fraser, "Robert Owen and the Workers," in Butt, editor, *Robert Owen*, 77; Taylor, *Visions of Harmony*, 49–50. Owen's plan for "Villages of Cooperation" can first be found in the "Report to the Committee of the Association for the Relief of the Manufacturing and Labouring Poor" (1817). He elaborated on this in "Further Development of the Plan for the Relief of the Poor and the Emancipation of Mankind" (1817), and "Report to the County of Lanark" (1820). All these are reprinted in *A New View of Society, and Other Writings* (Everyman edition), 156 ff.

37. For Owen's tribute to Bellers, see "A Catechism of the New View of Society and Three Addresses" (1817), in *A New View*, 183. On Beller's project, see Davis, *Utopia and the Ideal Society* (see note 27), 338–350.

38. Thomson is, however, much more critical of Owen than Harrison: e.g., "Owen was a preposterous thinker ... a mischievous political leader." "Owen simply had a vacant place in his mind where most men have political responses." "If Owen was the greatest propagandist of Owenism, he was also one of its worst enemies." One of Thompson's main emphases in fact is that we need to distinguish Owenism – at least from the late 1820s onwards – "from the writings and proclamations of Robert Owen." *Making of the English Working Class*, 783, 786, 789, 798. Critical too, though more in a spirit of exasperation, is Margaret Cole, "Owen's Mind and Methods," in S. Pollard and J. Salt, editors *Robert Owen: Prophet of the Poor* (London: Mcmillan, 1971), 188–213. More hostile still, with some interesting material on Owen's personal life and temperament, is Anne Taylor's recent study of Owen and the Owenite communities: *Visions of Harmony* (see note 35).

39. This is acknowledged even by those who emphasize Owen's indebtedness to existing traditions and practices: see, e.g., Stewart, "Paternalism in Scotland and the Owenite Ideal," 17.

40. Morton, *The English Utopia*, 168. On the importance of the New Lanark experience in convincing doubters, see also Manuel and Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 686. And cf. Buber on Owen: "Unlike that of Saint-Simon and Fourier his doctrine proceeds from practice, from experiment and experience. No matter whether he knew of Fourier's theories or not, Owen's teaching is, historically and philosophically speaking, a rejoinder to theirs, the empirical solution of the problem as opposed to the speculative one." *Paths in Utopia*, 21.

41. Owen, "Report to the County of Lanark" (1820), in *A New View*, 297 (Owen's emphasis).

42. Robert Owen, *Life of Robert Owen, Written by Himself*, Vol. 1 (1857), (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1920), 108. See also *The Revolution in the Mind and Practice of the Human Race* (1849) where Owen also bases his authority as a reformer on his long administration of the New Lanark mills. At the same time Owen often found it important to deny that New Lanark was a true experiment. "Its foundation is an error," he wrote, "and its super-structure could be amended only by an entire re-creation of new conditions. ... Let it therefore be kept in everlasting remembrance, that that which I effected at New Lanark was only the best I could accomplish under the circumstances of an ill-arranged manufactory and village, which existed before I undertook the government of the establishment." *Life of Robert Owen*, 109–110.

43. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 156–157; and for the general account of the life and organization of New Lanark, ibid., 151–163.

44. This is just a selection of Owenite writings and activities. For the full list of Owen's writings, with publication details, see Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 265–277; Owenite journals are listed on 347–354; and the associations of the Owenite movement are discussed on 197–232. Harrison's book also contains an invaluable bibliography of works on Owen and Owenism: see 278–369.

45. Owen, "An Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark" (1816), in *A New View*, 97. What moreover could be more in the spirit of utopianism than to have an enrol-ment office for membership of the New Society? Owen ended one of his addresses with an announcement of the imminent publication of a new journal, the *Mirror of Truth*. He continued: "In the meantime, on the first of next month all inquiries on the subject connected with the New State of Society are to be made, in person, or by letter, *post paid*, addressed to Dr. Wilkes, New State of Society Enrolment Of-fice, Temple Chambers, Fleet Street, London." "A Catechism of the New View of Society and Three Addresses" (1817), in *A New View*, 223.

46. "An Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark," 97, 104. This does not necessarily support the view that Owen was already a fully committed millenarian at this time, as suggested by W. H. Oliver, "Owen in 1817: The Millenarian Moment," in Pollard and Salt, editors, *Robert Owen*, 166–187. As with much of the radical liter-ature of the time, the phrasing plays on Biblical associations, to give it greater power and persuasiveness. But Owen still seems to be distancing himself from the millenarianism that was enjoying a strong revival at the time. Cf. his comment from the same address: "What ideas individuals may attach to the term Millennium I know not; but I know that society may be formed so as to exist without crime, without property," ibid, 106.

47. Quoted in Manuel and Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 589. The Manuels note that on the outside of Owenite buildings the letters C. M. were prom-inently carved, signifying the Commencement of the Millennium. On the develop-ment of Owen's millennialism, and its spread in the Owenite movement, see Harri-son, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 92–139; see also Taylor, *Visions of Harmony*, 86, 228. On Owen's "millenarial leap" and the development of his "secular chil-iasm," see Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 787–789, 798–802. Thompson quotes from Owen's Address at the National Equitable Labour Exchange, 1 May 1833: "I therefore now proclaim to the world the commence-ment, on this day, of the promised millennium, founded on rational principles and consistent practice." Ibid., 789.

48. See K. Kumar, *Religion and Utopia* (Canterbury: Centre for the Study of Religion and Society, University of Kent, 1985). For a spirited attempt at a *rapprochement* between utopia (Marxism) and religion (Christianity), see J. Marsden, *Marxism, Utopia and the Kingdom of God: Towards a Socialist Political Theology* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury, 1988).

49. As brought out especially by John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1870), passim, esp. 191–192, 669–670. See also Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias*, 38–59.

50. See Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932); Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background to the Idea of Progress* (New York: Harper and Row, 1949). I am aware the Becker's view of the Enlightenment is controversial, and has been vigorously disputed. See especially Peter Gay, "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," in his *The Party of Humanity: Studies in the French Enlightenment* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 188–210; and more generally, Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. (London: Wildwood House, 1973), Much however turns on literal or "symbolic" readings of Enlightenment texts, and I think that Becker's view can be sustained. It is in any case noteworthy that while Gay disputes Becker's contention of the "Christian character" of the Enlightenment he does not deny its utopian character: see, e.g., "Carl Becker's Heavenly City," 169, 202.

51. On the appeal of non-Christian or "post-Christian" millenarianism to rationalist and utilitarian thinkers and groups in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Oliver, "Owen in 1817," 166–167, 182–186. The less intellectual forms of millenarianism of this period are fully covered in J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780–1850* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979). For their expression in the popular literature of the time, see Louis James, *Print and the People 1819–1851* (London: Allen Lane, 1976).

52. The most sustained attempt is in Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. N. Plaice, S. Plaice, and P. Knight, 3 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), esp. Vol. 1, 205 ff. See also Wayne Hudson, *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch* (London: Macmillan, 1982). There is a stimulating discussion of Marxism's millenarian inheritance in Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1949), 145–159. Millenarian themes in Marx are also stressed in R. Tucker, *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961). Good general discussions are in Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Two Marxisms* (London: Macmillan Press, 1980), ch. 5; and David McLellan, *Marxism and Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1987).

53. Bertell Ollman has made an interesting attempt to construct this: see "Marx's Vision of Communism: A Reconstruction," *Critique*, No. 8 (Summer 1977), 4–41. See also note 26 above.

54. Quoted in Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 68.

55. Owen, "Report to the County of Lanark," in *A New View*, 284.

56. Quoted in Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 145; and generally on the Owenite view of education and the community, ibid., 139–147. Owen's own statement of the aims of education is in "Report to the County of Lanark," 278–284. For other discussions of education and Owenism, see H. Silver, *The Concept of Popular Education: A Study of Ideas and Social Movements in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965); J. F. C. Harrison, editor, *Utopianism and Education: Robert Owen and the Owenites* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968).

57. For a comprehensive statement of these aims, see Owen, "Report to the County of Lanark," 274–278, 284–298. For an excellent study of Owenite theory and practice relating to the family, marriage, and the role of women, see Barbara Taylor, *Eve and the New Jerusalem* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

58. Quoted in Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 137.

59. Harrison, ibid., 165; so also Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias*, 201.

60. The best account of the New Harmony experiment is in Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias*, chs. 4–8. The most recent, and most critical of Owen's role, is Taylor, *Visions of Harmony* (see note 35 above). And see also: George B. Lockwood, *The New Harmony Movement* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1905); William E. Wilson, *The Angel and the Serpent: The Story of New Harmony* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964); W. H. G. Armytage, "Owen and America," in Pollard and Salt, editors, *Robert Owen*, 214–238; M. Holloway, *Heavens on Earth: Utopian Communities in America 1680–1880* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), 101–116.

61. For details of the "lost communities," of which he estimates there were at least 16 in America and 10 in Britain, see Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 163–192; R. G. Garnett, "Robert Owen and the Community Experiments," in Pollard and Salt, editors, *Robert Owen*, 39–64; idem, *Co-operation and the Owenite socialist communities in Britain, 1825–1845* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972); Dennis Hardy, *Alternative Communities in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Longman, 1979), 20–64; W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below: Utopian Experiments in England 1560–1960* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 77–167.

62. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 175. For echoes of this verdict, see Pollard, "Introduction" to Pollard and Salt, editors, *Robert Owen*, vii; Garnett, "Robert Owen and the Community Experiments," 43, 60; Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 797. The Manuels call the New Harmony experiment "a fiasco:" *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, 688.

63. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 797.

64. See Sidney Pollard, "Nineteenth-Century Co-operation: From Community Building to Shopkeeping," in A. Briggs and J. Saville, editors, *Essays in Labour History* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 74–112; see especially the quotation from Owen, 85 n. 3.

65. See G. D. H. Cole, *Attempts at General Union: A Study in British Trade Union History 1818–1834* (1939; London: Macmillan, 1953).

66. Garnet, "Robert Owen and the Community Experiments," 41. For a sympathetic discussion of the problems of the communities, see Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites*, 176–192. One particularly striking instance of the disjunction of theory and practice in Owenism is in the relation of the Community experiments to Owenite attitudes to machinery and the creation of wealth. Owenism was important, as Gregory Claeys shows, in breaking with the older moral economy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in pointing the way to "economic socialism" with its whole-hearted acceptance of industrial technology and an economy of growth. See G. Claeys, *Machinery, Money and the Millennium: From Moral Economy to Socialism, 1815–1860* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), passim, esp. 130–161. But, with the exception of the Labour Exchanges and of course New Lanark itself, Owenite practice was largely restricted to Communitarian experiments in which agriculture and older notions of self-sufficiency predominated. Owenite theory looked forward to Marxian socialism, but its practice was moulded by eighteenth-century conceptions of the virtues of agrarian life and the dangers of

luxury. Here theory had to bend to the necessities of the environment in which the communities were largely located – rural, not to say wilderness, regions.

67. Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, 798; see also 805.

68. See on this, in the context of American communities of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); and, in an even wider-ranging discussion that includes the Israeli kibbutzim, Charles J. Erasmus, *In Search of the Common Good: Utopian Experiments Past and Future* (New York: The Free Press, 1977).

69. See, for instance, the discussion of the causes of the break-up of British communes of the 1960s and 1970s in Andrew Rigby, *Alternative Realities: A Study of Communes and their Members* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 272–297.

70. Kanter, *Commitment and Community*, 244–245. The successful ones were overwhelming the religious ones. Bestor for the period 1663–1860 identifies 130 communities, of which 38 were Owenite or Fourierist: *Backwoods Utopias*, 233–243. Noyes listed 41 failures in the century up to 1850: *History of American Socialisms*, 138–139. He too picked out religion as the key to long-term survival.

71. See, on the communes of the 1960s, R. E. Roberts, *The New Communes: Coming Together in America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971); M. Melville, *Communes in the Counter-Culture* (New York: William Morrow, 1972). And see also note 79, below.

72. Aldous Huxley, "Ozymandias," in his *Adonis and the Alphabet, and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956), 100. For the value of communities see also Armytage, *Heavens Below*, 430–440.

73. Owen, "A Catechism of the New View of Society and Three Addresses," in *A New View, etc.*, 184. And see also the similar remarks in the "Report to the County of Lanark," in ibid., 285, 299.

74. Owen, "A New View of Society" (1813), 41. See also the proposals concerning children and education in the "Report to the Committee for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor" (1817), in *A New View*, 162–163.

75. Owen, "An Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark" (1816), in *A New View*, 98. This remark, as well as the concern shown elsewhere in Owen's writings with the formation of character through a detailed and careful control of the physical and social environment, point up Owenism's kinship with the "experimental community" tradition exemplified not so much by socialist theory and practice as by American communitarianism (and, in a different way, the kibbutz). There is a closer link between Owenism and B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two* than between Owenism and the European socialist movement as it developed from about the 1880s. For examples of Owen's "behaviorism" see, in the Everyman edition of *A New View*, 34–36, 40–41, 65, 111, 188, 294.

76. Weber is quoted in Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, 128.

77. Buber, ibid., 99; see also 96–98. For the dangers to socialist practice of Marxism's failure "to specify possible futures as closely as possible," see also Lukes, "Marxism and Utopia" (see note 5, above). And on the interesting example of Marx's and Engels's fluctuating attitudes to the nineteenth-century American socialistic communities, see L. S. Feuer, "The Influence of the American Communist Colonies on Engels and Marx," *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1966), 456–474.

78. See on this Eileen Yeo, "Robert Owen and Radical Culture," in Pollard and Salt, editors, *Robert Owen*, 84–114. Barbara Taylor also stresses the extent to which

Owenism aimed at personal and cultural as well as economic and political trans-
formation: *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, xiv, 21, 285–287. This is what makes it so
dangerous, and misleading, to treat Owenism simply as an early chapter in the his-
tory of socialism, as if later, more "mature" phases had superseded the earlier anal-
yses and prescriptions. What is clear in fact is the extent to which socialism has had
to recover the richness, the multi-dimensionality, of the early utopian socialists.

79. See Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times*, 347–378, 402–419. The
1960s commune movement is well discussed and analyzed in Rigby, *Alternative
Realities*; idem, *Communes in Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974);
P. Abrams and A. McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology and Society* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1976). The American communes of the time are sur-
veyed in Robert Houriet, *Getting Back Together* (New York: Coward, McCann and
Geoghegan, 1971). See also note 71, above.

80. See Pollard, "Introduction" to Pollard and Salt, editors, *Robert Owen*, ix.

81. Quoted in Taylor, *Visions of Harmony*, 196. For Owen's Mexican project, see ibid.,
194–196; Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias*, 216–217.

82. Quoted in Taylor, *Visions of Harmony*, 229.

83. "Owen," says Garnett, "was not really interested in community development, nor
was he at heart capable of cooperation." "Robert Owen and the Community Ex-
periments," 60. This seems too strong; but it is true that Owen was not very good at
community living and, as he grew older, devoted himself largely to his writing and
to speaking wherever he could find an audience.

84. For Proudhon and Kropotkin, see Buber, *Paths in Utopia*, chs. 4–5. See also Colin
Ward's edition of and introduction to Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories, and Work-
shops Tommorrow* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974); Paul and Percival Good-
man, *Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life* (New York: Vintage
Books, 1960).

85. See K. Kinkade, *A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks
Community* (New York: William Morrow, 1973). An account of the later phases of
Twin Oaks, showing an even greater departure from Skinner's model, is forth-
coming from one of its current members, Allen Butcher.

86. See for some examples of this, Abrams and McCulloch, *Communes, Sociology and
Society*, 155–156. The Situationists in France in 1968 made it a point of principle
that groups should not try to maintain themselves for too long: quoting Hegel, they
argue for the desirability of constant schism. See Situationist International, *The
Veritable Split in the International*, English translation (London: B. M. Piranha,
1974). And cf. Harrison on the legacy of Owenite communitarianism: "The most
enduring aspects of a social movement are not always its institutions, but the mental
attitudes which inspire it and which are in turn generated by it. Habits of thought
may long outlive the institutions of the movement in the minds of the men and
women who participated in it as much as a quarter of a century earlier. In many
cases this is the real area in which change has been effected, rather than in legisla-
tion or the outward arrangements of society. The physical and intellectual expe-
rience which participation brings makes a lasting mark on the individuals concer-
ned, even though they do not attain their original goals." *Robert Owen and the Owe-
nites*, 249.

87. Jurgen Moltmann, "Foreword" to M. Douglas Meeks, *Origins of the Theology of
Hope* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), x. See also P. Tillich, "Critique and Justifica-
tion of Utopia," in Manuel, editor, *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, 296–309.
Coming from the other direction, as it were, Max Horkheimer makes a similar

point: "The concept of God was for a long time the place where the idea was kept alive that there are other norms besides those to which nature and society give expression in their operation. Dissatisfaction with earthly destiny is the strongest motive for acceptance of a transcendental being. If justice registers with God, then it is not to be found in the same measure in the world. Religion is the record of the wishes, desires and accusations of countless generations." Quoted in McLellan, *Marxism and Religion*, 124. McLellan comments that for Horkheimer "the legacy of religion was the idea of perfect justice which, while it might be impossible of realisation in this world, yet served as a constant basis of opposition to the powers that were." Ibid., 125. And for the importance of religious, especially Jewish thought in the "negative dialectics" of the Frankfurt School, see Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923–1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), passim, esp. 56, 261–263.